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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 000181

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/SE AND EUR/SCE

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TAGS: [GR](#) [PREL](#) [MACEDONIA](#)

SUBJECT: GREEK FM STRESSES GRADUAL INTEGRATION IN THE
BALKANS, CONTINUES TO PRESS FOR U.S.
INVOLVEMENT ON MACEDONIA NAME ISSUE

Classified By: Amb. Charles P. Ries. Reasons 1.4(b/d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: In their introductory meeting on January 13, Greek FM Molyviatis told the Ambassador that Greece wanted to bring Serbia into the European family, which would also be a way to ease the way forward on Kosovo. An "intermediate trusteeship" for Kosovo would be more stabilizing for the region than full independence, he asserted. Molyviatis urged the U.S. to remain firmly committed to UN-sponsored talks on the Macedonia name issue as the quickest way to resolve this longstanding dispute and allow relations between Athens and Skopje to normalize. Other issues reported septels. END SUMMARY.

LESS THAN INDEPENDENCE FOR KOSOVO IS BETTER FOR THE REGION

2. (C) Molyviatis told the Ambassador at their first meeting on January 13 that he supported the full, but "gradual", reintegration of the Balkans into Europe. The violence that tore apart the ex-Yugoslavia in the 90s was not an exceptional event in Europe's long and bloody history, and, therefore, it was not a reason to exclude the Balkans from Europe now. Specifically, Molyviatis was very concerned about Kosovo and Serbia. Of all the ex-Yugo and Balkan states, Serbia and Montenegro was the only one that was not really on a track toward European integration (because, he admitted, of Serbia's lack of cooperation with ICTY). Molyviatis believed that if a way could be found to bring Serbia more fully into the European family, this would ease the way forward on Kosovo. Admittedly, Serbia was plagued by internal political wrangling, which did not help the situation.

3. (C) Molyviatis urged caution in deliberations on Kosovo's final status. Independence might stabilize Kosovo itself, but Molyviatis strongly believed it would be destabilizing for the region. He told the Ambassador he was thinking about different solutions for Kosovo and floated as one idea an "intermediate trusteeship by the UN or the EU" as a temporary first measure.

4. (C) Note: MFA Balkans Director Ambassador Alexandros Mallias will travel to Washington the week of January 17 for meetings with Department, NSC and NGO officials to discuss next steps in the Balkans, particularly review of Kosovo's final status. Mallias, who recently traveled to Belgrade and Pristina, can be expected to push for greater U.S. engagement and believes that 2005 will be a crucial year for the region. We will want to make clear to Mallias our continued desire to see Greece play more of a leadership role, such as using its UNSC seat and upcoming SEECF chairmanship to highlight sensitive Balkans issues and implementing its 500 million euro Balkan Reconstruction Fund. End Note.

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5. (C) Referring to the January 14 talks in New York between Athens and Skopje on the Macedonia name issue, Molyviatis told the Ambassador that Greece and FYROM needed to resolve this dispute soon. Greece, he claimed, was prepared to make a "substantial concession," and indeed, had put an offer on the table in December that included the words "Republika Makedonija". What Greece would like now is a response from Macedonia. "They don't have to agree, just put a proposal on the table" said Molyviatis. He characterized resolution of the issue as a contractual matter between the two countries, and said the Greek position was fully supported by the EU. Unfortunately, he was not optimistic about the prospects for the January 14 talks in New York as he did not expect the Macedonians to come to the table prepared to deal.

6. (C) Molyviatis stressed that without active U.S. support for the talks, the issue could not be fixed. "If the U.S. doesn't convince Skopje to unstick the issue, the issue will not get unstuck," said Molyviatis bluntly. He added that the practical implications for both sides were huge: for instance, the MFA was holding 24 bilateral treaties with

Macedonia that have not been passed to the Parliament for ratification because the name issue is not solved. The Ambassador underscored that the U.S. remained committed to the UN process. Molyviatis urged the U.S. to reinforce this message on a continual basis in Skopje, adding that Greece would gladly entertain a counter-proposal from Skopje on the name as a way to give the talks new momentum.

RIES